

PUBLIC SPEAKING ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

In this region, English is mostly learned as the main subject. It starts from elementary school to university level, but most high school graduates cannot speak English even though they have been studying it for three years or more. This stimulated the researcher to create a breakthrough that would make it easier for students to practice their speaking skills as much as possible. The programs consisted of three activities: discussion (hot issues talk), debate forum, and speech presentation. Participants in this study were 50 second-year high school students in Indonesia. They were divided into two groups: experimental and control classes. The experimental class consisted of 25 students who engaged in public speaking activities, while the control class consisted of 25 students who did not participate. The findings of this quantitative analysis showed that members of the experimental class who engaged in public speaking exercises experienced an increase in their English-speaking skills. It can be discovered that public speaking activities can be used as an approach to enhancing the ability of high school students to speak.

Keywords: Speaking, public speaking activities, speaking ability/skill

INTRODUCTION

English is commonly used as the primary subject for Indonesian students. It is given since they are at the elementary school until the university level. Every institution is forced to prevail English as one of the ultimate lessons. Education stakeholder is still continuously modifying the various subject materials, the system of teaching and learning process and the appropriate methods. These efforts are directed to create students enable to use English in both of oral and written. In this case, the role of teacher is absolutely needed. He has to be more creative in finding the various and attractive ways to conduct English as interesting subject. Talking about the role of teacher, Gurrey (1961) commented that "teaching a foreign language is hard work, but hard work will nearly bring success, especially if a teacher persistently excel himself to make his

pupils do the work."

Learning English in a multilingual country is a major challenge as students study foreign languages after learning both local and national languages. Exhibition to English is not common practice on a daily basis. Moreover, Indonesia has many regional languages; each part of the country having a different language in the archipelago. While Indonesia is a non-English-speaking country, the role of English as a medium of international communication is inevitable in opening up global insight. Considering the importance of English as recognized in Indonesia's educational curriculum, it has been one of the compulsory subjects taught since junior high school; in reality, many elementary schools carry it out as a subject (depending on school policy).

English is a compulsory school subject, but many high school graduates

have not been able to speak English yet, although they have been studying English for many years. There are a few possibilities for this phase. First, the time allocated is limited to this subject. Second, several schools teach English through the language of Indonesia. Another significant explanation is that it is not used as a means of instruction for other subjects. That is why the degree of use of English is not so regular in the educational field (Noprifal, 2016).

Speaking is one of the most essential skills that English learners need to develop (Tinjacá & Contreras, 2008). They will be able to communicate well with strong speech skills (Hadfield & Hadfield, 2012). Harmer (2007) also points out that good oral communication is not just the ability to have knowledge of language features, but also the ability to process information. In this case, the role of teacher is absolutely needed. He/she has to be creative in finding attractive ways to conduct English as an interesting subject.

As stated in Noprifal (2016), the problems of speaking English faced by students have become the focus of several previous studies (Liu, 2007; Gan, 2012; Bilal, et.al 2013; & Al Hosni, 2014). This problem is also experienced by students at a senior high school in Bogor, Indonesia.

Based on the problems stated, one of the senior high schools in Indonesia took a real action to reinforce practicing English speaking skills by investigating public speaking activities or second year students. The program consisted of 3 activities: discussion (the hot issues talk), debate forum, and speech presentation. It enables students to involve communicatively in teaching-learning process. This is in line with Nunan (1991) interpreting the learning strategy as follow, "... are the mental processes which learners employ to learn and use the target language."

This current study is important to conduct because both teachers and students can cooperate in order to achieve one of the goals of learning English as a foreign language, that is, to make students able to speak English fluently. By doing this research, the speaking skills of the second year high school students can be improved by the public speaking activities. The purposes of this research were to discover the speaking skills progress of both of the students who participated and did not participate in the public speaking activities. Furthermore, it was also to find out the significant differences of the speaking skills between the students who joined the activities and those who did not join the activities.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Definition of Speaking

Speaking is oral communication where people can deliver information to each other in their conversation. Brown (2000) stated, "Speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing, receiving and processing information". Harmer (2007) stated that speaking is a skill which becomes an important part of daily life that it is the way for people to create social relationships as human beings.

From the definitions above, it can be concluded that speaking is the most important skill of language which is about a tool or device in communication, by speaking, people can deliver their ideas, opinions or thoughts about the world. Through speaking skills, people can communicate their ideas and messages with others.

Definition of Public Speaking

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, "**Public speaking** (also called **oratory** or **oration**) is the process or act of performing a speech to a live audience. Public speaking is

commonly understood as formal, face-to-face, speaking of a single person to a group of listeners.” However, due to the evolution of public speaking, it is modernly viewed as any form of speaking (formally and informally) between an audience and the speaker. However, due to the evolution of public speaking, it is currently regarded as any method of speaking (formally and informally) between the audience and the speaker. Traditionally, public speaking has been used as part of the art of convincing. The act may serve specific purposes, including informing, persuading, and entertaining. In addition, various techniques, systems and rules can be used depending on the speaking situation.

Public speaking is immensely closed to our daily life, such as when we listen to *Jum'at* preachment in the mosque. The preacher is a public speaker who conveys the messages to audience. He can establish a public opinion among the society. With his amazing styles, he is able to make audience have preferences upon the public speaking.

All teachers are public speakers when they are delivering a lesson to students. In addition, every student is a public speaker as well when he/she conveys his/her idea in front of the class.

Functions of Public Speaking

Public speaking may serve the purpose of transmitting knowledge, telling a story, inspiring people to act or encouraging people to do so. This style of speech is purposely designed for three general purposes: educating, persuading and entertaining. Some experts clarify in more detail that the roles of public speaking are to interest, to entertain, to educate, to ask, to persuade, to encourage, to denounce, to impress, to warn, to arouse, to advise, to explore, to move and to confuse. (Johnson, 2003; Nikitina, 2012; Crick & Crick, 2018).

Taken from the various functions

mentioned above, the researcher underlined only four functions: to convince, to instruct, to inform, and to actuate/stimulate.

1. to convince

The most common expressions that often appear in a speech to convince are:

I am convinced that ...
I believe (that) ...
I think (that) ...
I suppose (that) ...
I guess (that) ...
I presume (that) ...
I assume (that) ...
I doubt (that) ...
I expect (that) ...
I know (that) ...
I simply can believe (that) ...
I am sure that ...
It is a certain thing that ...
There is no doubt that ...
The very thing is that ...
It appears to me that
I would firmly say that ...
I'm completely sure that ...
I feel very certain that ...
The surest thing to consider seriously is that ...
We must now consider the possibility that ...
Do not pose any doubt, just take this conviction that ...
I have the conviction that ...

To the best of my knowledge, ...
it is possible that ...
it is likely that
it is (most) probably that ...
these data point to the possibility is that ...
a probable explanation for this is that ...
the most probable social problem exposed is (that)...

2. to instruct

The most common expressions that

often appear in a speech to instruct are:

Shall we pray!
Let me order you to ...
I would invite you to ...
I advise you to ...
I recommend that you should ...
It will be better if you ...
You should have known better that ...
I want you to ...
I would like you to ...
Think that you could do with money you spend on cigarettes! (It means that somebody asks somebody else to give up or stop smoking.)
Allow me to request you to ...
Could you ...?
Would you ...?
Could/Would you make up your mind?
I wonder if you let me remind you ...

3. to inform

The most common expressions that often appear in a speech to inform are:

I would like to say (that) ...
I would like to tell you (that) ...
I would like to inform (that) ...
I would like to report (that) ...
I would like to communicate (that) ...
According to the researchers, ...
In accordance with the state ideology, ...
Getting along with the agreement, ...
Referring to the role of the game, ...
Generally speaking, ...
Generally speaking, Japanese people are extremely diligent.
In majority of the case, ...

4. to actuate/stimulate

The most common expressions that

often appear in a speech to actuate or stimulate are:

I do hope that ...
Hopefully, ...
I am hopeful ...
I live in a hope that ...
In the hope of arriving at a better life, ...
There is ground for hope that ...
There is still hope. Look how ...
It is what I hope that you can ...
Please don't despair of making your English improve!
Please don't despair of asking your children to do reading!

Speaking (Public Speaking) Activities

Many of the speaking activities which are currently in use fall at or near the communicative end of the communication continuum (Harmer, 2007):

1. Acting from a script
Ask the students to act out scenes from plays and/or their course books, sometimes filming the results. Students will often act out dialogues they have written themselves.
2. Communication games
This activity's aim is to get students talking as quickly and fluently as possible. Information-gap games: one student has to talk to a partner in order to solve a puzzle, describe and draw, put things in the right order, or find similarities and differences between pictures.
3. Discussion
In discussion activity, students will talk and discuss anything. The type of discussion: buzz groups, instant comment, formal debates, unplanned discussion, and reaching a consensus.

4. Prepared talks

One popular kind of activity is the prepared talk, where a student (or students) makes a presentation on a topic of their own choice. Such talks are not designed for informal spontaneous conversation; because they are prepared, they are more 'writing-like' than this. However, if possible, students should speak from notes rather than from a script.

5. Questionnaires

Questionnaires are useful because by being pre-planned they ensure that both of the questioner and respondent have something to say to each other. Depending upon how tightly design they are, they may well encourage the natural use of certain repetitive language patterns - and thus can be situated in the middle of our communication continuum.

6. Simulation and role-play

Simulation and role-play can be used to encourage general oral fluency or to train students for specific situations. When students are doing simulations and role-plays, they need to know exactly what the situation is, and they need to be given enough information about the background for them to function properly. Of course, we will allow them to be as creative as possible, but if they have almost no information, they may find this very difficult to do.

Bygate (1987) assumed that the procedure of speaking learning process is signed by the information and interaction focus among the learners. He added that the features of tongue interaction are the simultaneous participation of the learners in expressing his mind. This is supported by Nunan (1991) saying that "the theory

and researcher summarized in the preceding section that learning to speak in a second language will be facilitated when learners are engaged in attempting to communicate."

Paying attention to the statements above, the speaking activities of accomplishing this research is oriented to create some forms of speaking learning activities. The researcher classified the activities into three forms: discussion (the hot talk issues), debate forum, and speech presentation. To carry out the three activities of public speaking, the researcher provided larger time that enables learners to have a leisure moment to have fun with English.

1. Discussion (the hot talk issues)

The original ability to interact clearly appears when every learner is conditioned to involve in this activity. He/she can learn how to speak, to convince, to interrupt, to refuse even to feel upset. The role of teacher is like an observer and supporter. He just keep watching at the activity and suggests the participant to solve the problem vividly.

The teacher guidelines the interesting topic where the learners can be attracted joining this activity. The hot talk issues should be considered as the stimulant for the participant to be more active, such as:

- a. Online learning
- b. The Covid-19 Pandemic
- c. The danger of being selfish
- d. Average salaries of teachers in Indonesia
- e. Social and economic gap
- f. Indonesia lives on the loan
- g. Corruption and its prevention

2. Debate Forum

Debate forum could become one of the effective ways or the communicative activity to force learners to speak more. The first stage to do is to divide

learners into two groups: affirmative group and opponent group. The second stage is delivering the motion or debatable issues, e.g. "Should we go to Afghanistan to help our muslim brother?" The last stage is providing the time for each group to give reasons. Affirmative group is a group that agrees with the motion, whereas opponent group tries to rebut its rival.

3. Speech Presentation

In this form of public speaking activity, a learner who is chosen to be a speaker has to prepare speech or text as well as possible. The other classmates have to pay attention to the speaker and be ready to take summary that will be delivered in front of class.

This form is commonly used in almost all modern *pondok pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) in Indonesia, and the researcher tried to modify with a challenging activity. In the old form of speech presentation, it provided time for a speaker to deliver a message only when audience was silent. In the newest form, it provided time for audience to ask and interrupt the speaker after finishing a speech. With this modification, it could create an active speaking community where a speaker and audience are involved vividly and directly at the same time.

Speaking Ability / Skill

Wilson (1983) explained that "Speaking is development of the relationship between a speaker and his/her audience. In addition, speaking is determining which logical linguistic, psychological, and physical rules should apply in given communicative situation."

The statement helps the researcher to formulate the definition of speaking ability which is suitable to the field of this research. Speaking ability is the power to convey messages from a speaker to his/her audience in their social

relationship which is supported by logical linguistic, psychological and physical rules.

Scopes of speaking ability / Skill

According to Harris (1978), "Speaking ability is a complex skill requiring the simultaneous a number of different abilities which often develop at different routes." He divided the scopes of speaking ability into four components: pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and comprehension.

Blair (1982) supported the above statement by explaining that "most linguists seem to assume that the various aspects of a language are all rather tightly interdependent. Pronunciation is related to grammar, grammar is related to vocabulary, noun phrases cannot be fully understood without understanding verb phrases."

1. Vocabulary component

Having enough vocabulary storage leads a learner to be more creative and active in using the target language since they can explore their mind and throw it out in English. This is in line with Rivers (1987) stating that "Vocabulary is a given mirror role until the students have a sure control of basic structural pattern and is able to express himself with a limited language."

To accomplish this component, both of a teacher and students should co-operate each other. Students pronounce new, unknown vocabulary, while the teacher automatically informs them appropriate words in the target language.

2. Pronunciation component

We cannot imagine if there is someone who cannot speak clearly since his/her pronunciation is bad or not good enough. This could make

other people cannot understand what he/she is trying to say. The component is one of the underlying aspects in speaking ability. Virgil (1967) stated that "Effective oral communication has been further defined as to listen and clearly understand what is said, to speak and to be clearly understood."

3. Grammatical component

It is one of the basic knowledge to produce and comprehend various sentences of a language. We use grammar to express the meaning of a target language. To comprehend the target language and its meaning, we absolutely need grammar as the tool of target language comprehension. Rivers (1987) commented, "Grammar is the part of language study that pertains to the different classes of word, their relation to one another and their functioning in sentences."

4. Comprehension component

One of the principles of language usage is to convey message to the listener(s). The primary necessity of having good communication is the ability of understanding a language. Wilson (1983) explained that "Speaking is development of the relationship between a speaker and his hearer. In addition, speaking is determining which logical linguistic, physiological and physical rules should apply in a given communicative situation."

Relationship between speaking ability and speaking learning process

Almost all the experts already tried to interpret the mean of learning. In this case, the researcher tried to adopt only some formulations to broaden his students' view on teaching and learning process. Romine (1954) stated that

"Learning is defined as the modification strengthening of behavior through experiencing."

Denoting to the statement above, we can take conclusion that the result of learning is how to change someone's behavior from the state of being not able to the state of being able. There are two things are related between learning process and having ability since the ability means "quality or fact being able, having enough strength, power to do thing" (Chamber twentieth century dictionary, Edinburgh, 1977)

Learning process pushes the human behavior to find a way to reach the ability and to possess it as well. This is stated in Webster dictionary that "ability is a tendency to act or to be acted on in a way." Referring to this definition, the researcher modifies a learning process form that enables to the students to do more active empowering his ability in speaking ability.

Based on the preceded definition above, there are two efforts to facilitate them in learning English. Firstly, the tendency to act which means it describes us that the learning process form provides the situation where the students rehearsal their mind to act. Burton (1962) commented, "A good learning situation consist of a rich and varied series of learning experience unified around a vigorous purposes and carried on in interaction with a rich, varied and proactive environment."

METHOD

The researcher attempted to carry out the data as scientific as possible; therefore, he used the quantitative method as his research methodology. To get the empirical data, the researcher applied the experimental method since "it is directed to examine the mentioned hypothesis" (Best, 1977).

Population and Sample

The population was all second year students of a senior high school in Bogor, Indonesia. The researcher took 50 students as a sample. He divided them into two groups: Group A consists of 25 students as the main group (experiment class) which was involved in the research that is the public speaking activities. Group B consists of 25 students as a control class that they did not join the public speaking activities.

Instrument

In obtaining the empirical data of students' speaking ability, the writer delivered the oral test to both of the groups. After having the test, he analyzed the result or the data of the test achievement through central tendency and sample of distribution of variance.

Hypothesis

There is a significant difference of the speaking skills between the students who joined the public speaking activities and those who did not join it. It means that speaking ability of the students who joined the activities is better than those who did not join it.

The statistical hypotheses are:

$$H_0: \mu_x - \mu_y = 0$$

$$H_1: \mu_x - \mu_y > 0$$

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Data Collection

Frequency of Distribution

X	Group A			Group B		
	F	FX	\bar{X}	F	FX	\bar{X}
9	1	9	6.76	-	-	-
8	4	32	6.76	-	-	-

7	10	70	6.76	2	14	5.16
6	8	48	6.76	4	24	5.16
5	2	10	6.76	11	55	5.16
4	-	-	-	8	32	5.16
	N=	169		N=	125	
	25			25		

Notes:

X = students' score

A = experiment class (25 students who joined the public speaking activities)

B = control class (25 students who did not join the public speaking activities)

Data Analysis

The percentage of group A and B

	Tally		Percentage	
	A	B	A	B
>mean	15	6	60%	24%
<mean	10	19	40%	76%

H_0 is accepted if $t_{\text{computed}} < t_{\text{table}}$ and H_0 is rejected if $t_{\text{computed}} > t_{\text{table}}$. Based on the data analysis, t_{computed} 5,92 is higher than t_{table} 2,397. T_{table} is shown at level significance 1% (@ : 0, 01). It is described that H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted. It means that there is a very significant difference between the students' speaking ability who involved in public speaking activities, and the students who did not participate in the activities of public speaking.

CONCLUSION

After finishing the research and analyzing the data on the public speaking activities for the participants, the researcher found the underlying conclusions from his research. Here are the conclusions:

1. The students who participated in the public speaking activities reached better result than the students who did not join the program. The statistical data showed that the values of the mean and deviation standard of experiment class are higher than ones of control class.
 - The students who involved in the activities reach the mean of 6.76 and deviation standard of 0.96 (experiment class).
 - The students who did not follow the activities reach the mean of 5.16 and deviation standard of 0.94 (control class).
2. Based on the computation to the result of sampling, the researcher found a significant difference between the participants and non-participants of the public speaking activities shown as follow:
t-computed is 5.92 and t table is 2.397. So, t-computed is higher than t table. This means H_0 is rejected, so there is a significant difference between the students who joined the public speaking activities and those who did not join it.

Suggestion

In order this research is able to be followed up and realized by English teachers, the researcher would like to underline some suggestion:

1. Teacher has to be a creative trainee in creating the teaching technique innovation that leads the learner into a new atmosphere of English learning.
2. Teacher should prepare the subject material before carrying out this program.
3. Teacher should be like a conductor in an orchestra that he is able to create

- the harmony condition during the show.
4. The public speaking activity has to be put in a higher priority by an education institution which concerns on the enrichment of students' intellectual capability that needs English as one of the key of their knowledge exploration.
5. Teacher should always perform and teach appropriate pronunciation.
6. Both students and teacher should cooperate during the learning process.
7. This activities should be accustomed among the students in order they are not nervous when they perform it.
8. Teacher should appreciate the progress of the students and encourage the weak students in language learning process. It is noted by River (1987:9), "For the genuine interaction language learning requires, however, individuals, teacher as well as students must appreciate the uniqueness of other individual with their special need nor manipulating or directing them or deciding, how they can or will learn, but encouraging them and building up their confidence and enjoyment in what they are doing."
9. Teacher is like an innovative designer; therefore, he should create a new breakthrough of learning process model.

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